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sie ihre Hände vom Kommentieren hätten lassen sollen. Hier braucht es keiner grossen syntaktischen Schulung: schon das Gefühl muss einem sagen, dass eine Bildung *selbst verfehelter Schritt* nach Analogie von *selbstgemachte Wurst* usw. unmöglich ist. Nicht mal in ein Wort sind *selbst* und *verfehlt* geschrieben, was doch unbedingt nötig wäre. Natürlich ist H's Auffassung im grossen und ganzen richtig; der Ton hat schnell über die Worte *ja ein selbst* hinwegzugleiten und je zur Hälfte auf *verfehelter* und *Schritt* zu fallen. Im Übrigen bietet jedes Wort H's Anlass zum Widerspruch.

Es liegt keine *gewaltsame, um nicht zu sagen unmögliche Wortstellung* vor! *Selbst* brauchte sich einzig und allein auf *verfehlt* zu beziehen (*modifizieren* nennt H. das!). *Verfehlt* heisst beinahe soviel wie 'unbeabsichtigt', der Gegensatz wäre also 'beabsichtigt'; 'Ein sogar unbeabsichtigter Schritt', was, pedantisch-arithmetisch angesehen, noch richtiger wäre als 'sogar ein unb. Schritt'. Und wie kühn ist die Behauptung, *es wäre aussichtslos, nach Parallelen für eine solche Sprachwillkür (!) suchen zu wollen*. Jeder, der über eine bescheidene Literaturkenntnis verfügt, vermag sie zu dutzenden beizubringen. *Es wäre aussichtslos . . . suchen zu wollen*: Herr H. sollte seiner eignen Sprache seine Bemühungen zuwenden. Zum Glück ist es *bisher übersehen, dass ein Schritt, den man selbst (und kein anderer) verfehlt, eine böse Tautologie ist*! Ein verfehelter Schritt, eine verfehltte Handlung, kann von mir oder von irgend einem andern herrühren; dass ein Schritt immer von dem getan sein muss, der von ihm spricht, leuchtet mir nicht ein; worin liegt also die Tautologie?

Und nun lese man von dem *etwas (!) kraftgenialischen Satz* und dem ganzen in Absatz 3 herbeicitierten Apparat! Die Stelle ist gewiss *rhythmisch (!)*: Aber *ja selbst ein verfehelter Schritt* ginge nicht an! Andererseits passte es dem Sinne nach sehr hübsch, wenn es hiesse *selbst ein* = 'selbst ein einziger verfehelter Schritt'. Und dass nicht ein *Donnerschlag etc. gemeint* ist, kann gar keinen Einfluss auf das Folgende haben, im Gegenteil: dem umfassenden, riesigen elementaren Ereignis dort wird hier ein einzelnes kleines gegenübergestellt. H. widerspricht sich ja auch selbst, im letzten Satze seines vierten Abschnitts.

Weiter: Dem Fatalismus Egmonts würde es durchaus nicht widersprechen, wenn er auch einen eignen Fehlschritt unter die Möglichkeiten rechnete, die ihn stürzen könnten. Ein merkwürdiger Fatalismus, der diese Möglichkeit ausschliesse! Aber ich frage jetzt: Wer würde denn den Fehlschritt tun? Doch kein anderer, als Egmont selbst! Also schliesst er ihn in die Möglichkeiten ein.

Alles Weitere, was H. über den Fall sagt, soll mit Schweigen bedeckt werden, vor allem der kleine Schlusssatz, mit *Übrigens* anfangend.

Es gibt Stellen im *Egmont*, an denen Interpretationskunst sich mit grösserem Rechte versuchen könnte, als diesen hier. Wo käme man hin, wenn man alle Einfachheiten der Art besprechen wollte!

GEORG SCHAAFFS.

University of St. Andrews.

SOME EGMONT INTERPRETATIONS

In the June issue of *Modern Language Notes* for 1911 Dr. Hollander tries to cast new light upon several passages in Goethe's *Egmont*.

Whether he has succeeded in rescuing the most important passages from the Cimmerian darkness of misinterpretation which he believes has brooded over them hitherto remains to be seen.

Most of us, I fear, will continue to think "ein selbst verfehelter Schritt" a false step for which the person who makes it is responsible, and will not be frightened by any apparition of a 'böse Tautologie.' At any rate, we hardly dare assume that the naturalistic young Goethe would say 'ein selbst verfehelter Schritt' for 'selbst ein verfehelter Schritt' for metrical reasons.

This passage, like a host of others in Goethe's works, looks backward and forward. It is part of the organism of the play, not merely a link in the chain of this particular conversation. It looks back to the passage: "Und wenn ich ein Nachtwandler wäre, und auf dem gefährlichen Gipfel eines Hauses spazierte, ist es freundschaftlich, mich beim Namen zu rufen und mich zu warnen, zu wecken und zu töten?" When under the somnambule spell the self is so controlled and so

limited in its impressions of the outer world, that it takes the dizzy path with precision; when wakened from the trance, the self is brought into complete relation to the outer world, and delivered over to its ordinary judgment of the complex of impressions, therefore becomes confused and uncertain and liable to misstep. Whose the responsibility? His who waked him, or his own? Certainly more directly his own than that of the warner; "Ein selbst verfehltter Schritt."

It looks forward to that crisis in Egmont's remarkable career, when in spite of the amplest warnings he goes confidently into Alba's well-laid trap, and is executed, the victim of his misjudgment of men and political movements. Again whose false step, if not his own?

But Dr. Hollander has other reasons for his very forced interpretation. To ascribe responsibility to Egmont for his misstep, is inconsistent with his fatalism. We might reply, to deny his responsibility, and lay the blame wholly upon Fate, i. e., influences wholly external to himself, as Dr. Hollander seems to understand the term, is to destroy the last vestige of dramatic struggle in the play and degrade it to the level of a pure fate-drama. It is certain that Goethe never intended his spectators and readers to feel that Egmont is not responsible for the rejection of Orange's warnings. He most deliberately rejects that 'fremden Tropfen in seinem Blute' and knowingly seeks the one 'freundliche Mittel' to drive away the cares which Orange's insistent words have caused.

However, 'Schicksal' is not necessarily 'rein äusserlich,' as Dr. Hollander seems to imply. 'Soll ich fallen,' may refer merely to a future possibility, an unexpected eventuality which may nevertheless occur, and does not force us to assume that this fall is to be an act of external fate. There is nothing to exclude 'eigene Schuld' in the assumption of a possible fall.

Philosophically we may be determinists without making the blunder of assuming that human action is wholly conditioned by environment. A person is as much a reality as any lifeless thing, and modifies environment, while at the same time undergoing modification by environment. Human action is always this resultant of personality and environment. Environment, so far as it consists

of inanimate nature, is absolutely determined; so far as it consists of personal wills, it is in the same category with the personality in question, either free or determined. The student of human affairs, who considers inheritance and early education, and realizes what character and habit imply, will be inclined to believe that all human wills are determined, that freedom is a mere figment of the ordinary uninformed intellect. If we believe that human wills are predetermined in volition by inherited character and the training which a home or a community has forced upon them with or without consent, then all human action must be assumed as determined. The fatalism in Goethe's drama is something of this sort. It does not exclude the subjective element, nor the sense of responsibility for what arises out of the subjective element, though the analytic intellect may judge such responsibility a delusion.

The passages in *Egmont* which give expression to the so-called fatalism of Goethe do not involve pure externality of fate. "O was sind wir Groszen auf der Woge der Menschheit? Wir glauben sie zu beherrschen, und sie treibt uns auf und nieder, hin und her." Here the regent is expressing a common delusion, that princes govern their peoples, when in reality they have to shift and drift and do what they can, not always what they will. It is the same notion which Egmont entertains of Alba's coming regency. It does not imply fatalism at all. "Wie von unsichtbaren Geistern gepeitscht, gehen die Sonnenpferde der Zeit mit unseres Schicksals leichtem Wagen durch; und uns bleibt nichts als mutig gefasst die Zügel festzuhalten und bald rechts, bald links, vom Steine hier, vom Sturze da, die Räder wegzulenken." A measure of directive power is left to the individual after all. "Es glaubt der Mensch sein Leben zu leiten, und sein Innerstes wird unwiderstehlich nach seinem Schicksale gezogen." Egmont does not say, and can not and dare not say, 'drawn by external fate.' When Ferdinand says: "Du hast dich selber getötet," Egmont admits, "Ich war gewarnt."

The fate which leads Egmont to ruin is *his own character*. If such a character makes a false step and plunges into ruin, it is certainly 'ein selbst verfehltter Schritt' and we can not make it otherwise by referring to the 'demonic element.' The

demonic element is just this unanalyzable self, this character, this personality, which seems to itself so free, and yet is so bound by its own nature that it works out its own destiny in incalculable ways in union with environment.

It is difficult to see either the 'unspeakable prosiness' of this conception, or a descent from the 'sublime to the ridiculous.'

With respect to the third passage, I fear that Dr. Hollander injects too much subtle meaning into it. Egmont is not talking statecraft or moral philosophy with Klärchen. When the latter refers to Egmont's relations to the regent she is in all probability probing a relationship which Egmont himself later calls 'Freundschaft, die fast Liebe war.' When Egmont declares that the regent always seeks 'Geheimnisse hinter seinem Betragen,' whereas he has none, she asks teasingly (with reference to Egmont's love for herself), 'so gar keine?' He replies, taking her cue: "Eh nun! Einen kleinen Hinterhalt." If this refers to Egmont's love for Klärchen, which is not worn on his sleeve for daws to peck at, then the 'Weinstein' passage does not require such subtle analysis. The meaning must not be beyond the intellectual reach of Klärchen. The simplest interpretation might prove the best. Every individual, in the course of time, enters into various private relations which are nobody else's business. They are the peculiar deposits of the individual's life. Goethe was usually rather fortunate in his use of comparisons, and was well enough acquainted with wine to distinguish between crystals and dregs. The formation of 'Weinstein' does not make the wine 'trübe,' and so the new interpretation rests upon the gratuitous assumption of ignorance on Goethe's part.

JOHN WILLIAM SCHOLL.

University of Michigan.

A LATIN COUNTERPART OF THE ST. LÉGER STROPHE

The poem of *St. Léger*, which is supposed to have been written at Autun (Saône-et-Loire) in the last part of the tenth century, consists, as we know, of strophes of six octosyllabic lines which

rhyme or assonance two by two ($\frac{8}{aabbcc}$). The musical notation which accompanies it in its single manuscript, and its own expressions also, shows that it was composed for singing.¹ In terms of Latin prosody the verse is iambic dimeter. As a matter of fact, the line presents a regular alternation of unaccented and accented syllables, exception being made for the two lines which begin with "Domine Deu."²

Now, because the poem was sung, and also because its nature is religious and hortatory, there is every reason to suppose it was patterned on a model furnished it by some Latin hymn. That the records of Latin hymnology may not have yet disclosed any exact prototype would not constitute any serious objection to this view.³ For already in the seventh century the Bangor antiphony (about 690) knew a hymn which corresponds quite closely to *St. Léger*, composed as it is of strophes of six octosyllabic lines in monorhyme, with a refrain of two similar lines.⁴ Wilhelm

¹ We would recall the words of the first strophe:

Domine Deu devemps lauder
Et a sos sancz honor porter.
In su amor cantomps del sanz
Quae por lui augrent granz aanz.
Et or es temps et si est biens
Quae nos cantumps de sant Lethgier.

Graphically this particular strophe would read

˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘, ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘, etc.

But in the larger number of strophes the first line agrees rhythmically with the other five:

˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘,

so that we would have here an example of what J. B. Beck calls the second form of the first modus (*Die Melodien der Troubadours*, p. 116).

² See note 1. This was not Gaston Paris' opinion when he discussed the versification of *St. Léger* in *Romania*, I, pp. 292-296. For at that time he found three different accentual schemes:

˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘, ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘,

and rarely

˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘ ˘.

It is this third scheme, considered least frequent by Paris, which seems to me the standard.

³ Gaston Paris (*l. c.*) says indeed that there are such models, but fails to cite them. My own reading has been too restricted to be relied upon.

⁴ F. E. Warren, *Antiphony of Bangor* (London, 1895), II, p. 37. The first strophe contains eight octosyllabic lines. I quote the second, which offers the regular form: